

# PEOPLE & THINGS

**T**HE dunce's cap which was recently thrust upon Mr. Molotov's head was possibly a minor gambit in the game of chess Russia is at present playing with Marshal Tito. It was probably a theatrical snub for the haste with which Molotov condemned the Tito régime when diplomatic relations were severed between Russia and Yugoslavia, rather than punishment for the technical quibble about whether socialism had already "arrived" in Russia or whether only the "foundations had been laid."

Whatever the reason, it was a neat example of the machinery of Soviet foreign policy in which the hierarchy briefs, the Foreign Minister acts, and the Secretariat of the Central Party Committee examines and criticises the actions in the light of results. After that, if a postscript is needed, it is supplied by the Press—in this case by "Kommunist," but generally by "Pravda."

## Man to Watch

"**PRAVDA**" is the small visible peak of the huge submarine iceberg which is Soviet policy, and it is significant that the present editor is D. T. Shepilov, forty-nine years old and a close friend of Khrushchev.

Before Shepilov came to "Pravda" he was head of the sinister Agit-Prop Department, which controls diversion and propaganda abroad, and it is not encouraging to hear rumours that he is playing a considerable role in Russia's Middle East policy-making.

Shepilov has recently been leaving his editorial chair at "Pravda" and emerging openly as a political figure. He was prominent at the second honeymoon between Russia and Yugoslavia and in July he attended the Egyptian Liberation celebrations in Cairo.

If and when Molotov is dropped, Shepilov of "Pravda" may quite possibly take his place as Foreign Minister.

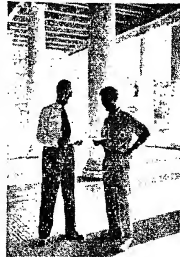
## By the Way . . .

**U**NDER the shadow of the Acropolis, restoration of the magnificent colonnade known as the Stoa of Attalos is going forward under the direction of Professor Homer Thompson, head

of the American School of Archaeology.

A few days ago, while dismantling part of the original foundations, Professor Thompson came upon two blocks of marble, secured to each other by iron clamps, which could hardly have been disturbed since they were placed one upon the other twenty-two centuries ago.

Then, in the words of the Professor, "as we removed the upper



Prof. Thompson (right) in the Stoa.

block, from between this and the lower block there leapt out a frog. We could not subsequently find the frog but there it was, and we all saw it."

I should add that Professor Thompson is a sober and entirely reliable archaeologist of world-wide renown.

## Premier Inter Pares

**P**EERS will have the rare distinction on October 26, the day after they reassemble, of welcoming a serving Prime Minister to their membership. Viscount Malvern, more easily identified as Sir Godfrey Huggins, will take his seat in the House of Lords and thus form a unique personal link between Westminster and the new Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

Lord Malvern, who has broken Mr. Mackenzie King's record for the longest unbroken service as a Commonwealth Prime Minister—he has been head of Governments

continuously since 1933—will be introduced in the Lords by two old friends—Viscount Chandos, who had close personal and official relations with him when he was Secretary of State, and Viscount Hudson, who has farming interests in Rhodesia.

## Kubelik

**A** FIRST-CLASS conductor can be judged as surely from the silence he creates as from the sound, and I hear from Covent Garden that there is no mistaking the intensity of attention which Mr. Rafael Kubelik, the theatre's new Musical Director, has inspired throughout rehearsals for tomorrow evening's opening performance of "Otello."

Mr. Kubelik has been a welcome and inspiring visitor to London since he first came in his early twenties with the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, and now that, at forty-one, he is to devote the main part of his energies to Covent Garden, he is determined to reanimate the standards of "opera in English" as surely as his great countryman Smetana reanimated the Prague Opera in the 1860s.

## The Modest Flame

"**T**HERE must be no barrier between performers and audience," is the Kubelik dictum. "The sympathy must be uninterrupted, as it was in Shakespeare's 'round O'."

Mr. Kubelik's first performances will be given in Italian, with great visitors as Othello, Iago, and Desdemona; but his policy will be to give English singers the self-confidence, the sense of authentic style, and the all-round experience that are essential to the making of a homogeneous company.

In relation to his own great gifts Mr. Kubelik is unaffectedly modest: "We shall need the best conductors we can get," he says. But when he came to outline his plans for the repertory (which includes the ever-delayed first London production of Berlioz's "Les Troyens") there was no mistaking the spark of high imagination which will set Covent Garden afire for many seasons to come.

## The Lysenko Affair

**T**HE Soviet brain specialist, Professor S. A. Sarkisov, leader of the delegation of Russian doctors to this country, knows London well. He was the Soviet Red Cross and Red Crescent representative here during the war when he worked under Lady Churchill on the "Aid to Russia" Fund.

On Wednesday, when the delegation visits the Wellcome Foundation, Professor Sarkisov will meet an old war-time friend, Sir Henry Dale, who is chairman of the Trust, and Sir Henry will be less than human if he does not inquire after the health of another eminent Soviet scientist, Nicholas Vavilov, who fell from grace during the Lysenko dispute over inherited characteristics.

Sir Henry, who was created an honorary member of the Soviet Academy of Science in 1942, resigned in 1948 in protest against the Soviet "liquidation" of Vavilov for disagreeing with Lysenko's theories.

## Mr. Cape's Apprentice

**T**OMORROW Mr. Michael Astor, the third son of the late Viscount Astor, enters the famous publishing house of Jonathan Cape as an apprentice with view to adopting publishing as a career.

It will not be easy for a man of thirty-nine, who was a Member of Parliament for six years after the war and has since been farming 1,000 acres in Oxfordshire, to go to school again, but Michael Astor should take quickly to publishing. He is not only that rare being, an intelligent intellectual, and an amateur painter of such quality that he is a member of the Art Panel of the Arts Council, but (alas, even more important in the publishing world!) he has a good enough financial brain to be chairman of the Grants Committee of the National Playing Fields Association.

As for his choice of firm, Michael Astor decided wisely. The last two of "Mr. Cape's young men," Rupert Hart-Davis and Hamish Hamilton, became the two most successful new publishers of their generation.

## "Excelsior"

*One afternoon, as heavenward  
The pious monks of St. Bernard  
Uttered their sonorous antiphon,  
A voice rang through the telephone.*

**T**HIS adaptation of Longfellow is by Mr. Norman Crump, City Editor of this journal, whose car broke down the other day on the last zigzag of the Great St. Bernard Pass.

Every two kilometres on the St. Bernard Pass there is a "rescue" telephone. Mr. Crump found the nearest and telephoned for help.

In due course there arrived a breakdown van, a mechanic, a small boy, a priest and six seminarists.

The car was quickly mended and the priest and the seminarists, blessing Mr. Crump for his divine intervention, trudged on up the last short stretch to the top of the pass.